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Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Forwarded herewith is a copy of a letter I sent to Senator Symington, as Acting Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, clarifying my testimony with respect to the Lao irregulars on 27 June 1973. This followed a discussion with Senator Symington which I felt essential before CIA personnel could pass the funds required on 28 July.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill

Attachment

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28 JUL 1973

The Honorable Stuart Symington
Acting Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Symington:

I would respectfully like to clarify the testimony I gave at the meeting of the Committee on Armed Services on Wednesday, 27 June 1973. The relevant portions are:

Mr. Colby: "... The Lao irregular forces are being fully integrated into the regular Army in Laos during Fiscal Year 1974.

"Thus it has been proposed that these forces be supported in Fiscal '74 by MASF funds. And such funds will be passed to the Royal Lao Government from the DOD directly...." (page 2617)

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Senator Symington: "... Will the irregulars still be paid by CIA case officers?..."

Mr. Colby: "The answer is basically no. The irregular Lao forces will be transferred into the Royal Lao Army. They will be at least initially handled as separate units. And they will continue to get some support, but not through CIA. This would be handled by funding given to the Royal Lao Government and the military authorities. But the CIA officers will not any longer participate in the payment." (page 2671)

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Senator Symington: "Do you still maintain different pay scales for the Thai units, the Laos irregular units and the regular Laos armed forces?"

Mr. Colby: "They are at the moment slightly different, and in some respects considerably different. But they will be gradually put together. Thailand will be a separate one all along until it is phased out, but the Lao irregular one will be gradually integrated into the regular Lao pay scale." (page 2676)

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Senator Symington: "Will the Laos irregular units still be directed or advised by CIA personnel in FY 74?"

Mr. Colby: "This will be phased out during the 60 days during the establishment --"

Senator Symington: "Before the establishment. And we have been hearing about peace and honor and such things for a long time. During the period that they are not --"

Mr. Colby: "There will be an interim period in which they will be phased out."

Senator Symington: "Will you continue to be advising them with CIA personnel?"

Mr. Colby: "There will be an interim period. Just how long it will last, I don't know."

Senator Symington: "It might run 3 or 4 years if you don't get an agreement."

Mr. Colby: "I don't think so, because the integration of the irregular forces into the Lao Army will take place in the next few months." (page 2677)

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Senator Symington: 'A Foreign Relations Committee report has stated that one of the reasons that the Laos irregular forces' morale is superior to the morale of the regular forces is because the irregular forces are supervised by CIA personnel who insure that the men actually get paid. Will CIA personnel continue to do this in FY 74?'

Mr. Colby: 'The answer is, we will phase that function out, and we will not do it any longer.' (page 2678)

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Senator Symington: 'As I understand it, everything is going ahead, as you testified, as it has been in the past, although it is slightly reduced maybe in some cases, unless and until there is an agreement between Souvanna Phouma and Souvanna Phong, is that right?'

Mr. Colby: 'Not quite, sir. I think the process of the integration of the Lao irregulars into the Royal Lao forces is under way now and will be completed in a matter of months.' (pages 2679-2680)

I cite the above in order to clarify fully CIA's activities with respect to the Lao irregulars. Funds for the support of the Lao irregulars will come from the DOD budget in FY '74. When the Lao irregular forces are fully integrated into the Lao armed forces, CIA personnel will have no further responsibility for advice to these forces or for handling these payments. This integration process has begun. There is, however, an interim period during which the Lao irregulars are phased into the Lao forces. During this interim period, CIA will continue to pass the payments for these troops, using DOD funds. We anticipate that this will not take more than a few months. I will report to you the status of this activity on or before 1 October 1973.

Sincerely,

/s/

W. E. Colby

cc: Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The Secretary of Defense

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